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THE ANTI-UNION.

PRICE 2d.

Saturday, 29th. December 1798.

No. II.

" IF any of you know cause or just impediment why these two may not be lawfully joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace;—this is the last time of asking."

Prayer Book.

" For be ye well assured, that so many as are coupled together, otherwise than as God's word doth allow, are not joined together by God, neither is their matrimony lawful."

Ibid.

TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

M*UST it not be the height of folly to part with the management of our own concerns FOR EVER? This is a difficulty upon the question of an Union, suggested by your new friend, and disinterested adviser, the English under-secretary, in his celebrated pamphlet upon that subject. Listen, my countrymen; listen with patience, if you can, to the English secretary's solution of this difficulty. After an Union shall pass, he tells you, " we shall have Irishmen in the originating Cabinet of Great Britain, we shall have a number of Irish representatives, in proportion to our relative consequence, in the Parliament of the empire. Our affairs will be then discussed by our own members, in the presence of the wisest and freest assembly, which ever existed, where our interest is their interest, our prosperity their prosperity, our power their aggrandizement, and where, of course, the anxiety for our welfare must be as great in the British as in the Irish part of the Legislature."*

Are you not convinced, my countrymen, do you hesitate to execute the deed, which, while it consigns you and your posterity to the condition of eternal infancy or eternal dotage, at the same time secures to you, in perpetuity secures to you, guardians and trustees,

so pure, so disinterested, and so vigilant, that you may for ever sleep in security, and enjoy these golden dreams, which the simple English, who transact their own affairs, will be toiling to realize? With Irish advocates to plead our cause, and having for our Judges *the wisest and freest assembly which ever existed, where our interest is their interest, our prosperity their prosperity, and our power their aggrandizement*, must we not become the envy of all nations? Surely it must be faction, or spleen, or disaffection, or narrow-minded prejudice, that can raise any objection to this *new mode of administering the constitution*.

But may it not be suggested with deference to the patriot secretary, that there is a profusion of kindness to this country in the meditated arrangement? The Irish members, however their zeal for Ireland may be quickened by residence in England, and their intercourse with the originating cabinet, never can carry any Legislative measure, and as mere advocates, I doubt whether a few English barristers, as occasion might require, fee'd for the purpose, might not, with as much effect, and more œconomy, promote the Interests of Ireland, at the Bar of either House of Parliament, particularly as they would have to address them-

selves to men interested and prejudiced in favour of their clients.—I am ashamed, my countrymen, of this puny sophistry—Is it not known, that national insult is highly mischievous, and that to treat the understanding with contempt is the most galling of all insults? But we are called upon to discuss this question with temper, and however difficult a compliance may be to Irish feelings upon such a subject, we should comply.

To the objection, that our representatives cannot carry any measure in the united Legislature, from their comparative inferiority of numbers, it is answered, “that Yorkshire may equally complain.” Though I do not admit the reasoning, I adopt the case as fairly illustrative of the question. I readily admit, that from the necessary subjection of each part to the whole of a nation, such a complaint from Yorkshire would be highly absurd, and that it would be equally absurd from Ireland, *after a Legislative Union*. I go further—I do assert, that there are numerous classes of men in England, totally unrepresented in Parliament, who yet sustain no real grievance, and who have no substantial ground of complaint; the proprietor of terms for years, the copy holder, the owner of chattle interests of every kind, and various other classes of non-electors might be enumerated. I do not say, that the elective franchise ought not to be extended to such men; but if it ought, it is upon the ground of general policy, and not that they require it for their safety or protection.

Why is Yorkshire secure, though its representatives be merged in the general Parliament, and why is the non-elect of England safe, though he be totally unrepresented? Because the English Legislature cannot have any temptation or motive to injure Yorkshire, or the non-elect of England, whose prosperity and security must depend upon the condition of the nation at large. This appears to me to be so plain, that I am of opinion, that a county of England might be totally disfranchised with little or no detriment, except what it might

suffer in common with the rest of the nation, from the dangerous precedent, and the possible future abridgement of the representation of England, to a degree inconsistent with the liberties of the nation, and the principles of the British constitution.

But when it is admitted, that each component part of an incorporated nation must submit to the uncontrollable supremacy of the whole, and that any given county of England would be safe under such supremacy, even though it were totally unrepresented, does it follow that Ireland ought voluntarily to form a connection, *to which such subjection and dependence must be necessarily incident?* Or, (which must determine the former question) have we, from a fair review of past events, and a candid examination of our present state, reasonable ground, independent of the patriot secretary’s assurance, to conclude that the British parliament would feel towards us, as towards an English shire, and consider *our interest as their interest, our prosperity as their prosperity, our power as their aggrandizement?* if we have not, it must, indeed, be *the height of folly, to part with the management of our own concerns for ever.*

The advocates for an Union, are so sensible of this, that they contend, that it necessarily flows from the nature of a Legislative Union, and is a political axiom not requiring proof (they certainly have not as yet offered any) that after such an Union Ireland being identified in interest and Constitution with Great Britain, must be equally attended to, and equally cherished, by the common Legislature. I confess I am so dull, and so unenlightened, by Cattle logic, that I cannot perceive, either intuitively or demonstratively, the truth of this proposition. It certainly is not universally true, that all countries Legislatively United, or incorporated, must have a common interest; and that the common Legislature must equally consult the prosperity of every part. I shall put a case:—Would the Legislative incorporation of America with Great Britain, by admitting deputies from the

former into the British Parliament, produce the alledged effect? America thought otherwise, and received the project for it was projected,) with derision. Would a Legislative, or an incorporate Union (the world is much given to metaphor, which often leads to error) between France and England, so identify their interests, that equal culture and protection would certainly follow? Certainly not; the habits and sentiments which prevailed for centuries, would not vanish before the magic of a name; and the greater country would be every thing, and the lesser country nothing. Identity of interest, mutually and clearly felt and understood, should be the antecedent cause, the basis and foundation of every such Union, and not chimerically pursued as its fruit and consequence. The best writer in support of an Union, has told you, that *the generosity of nations is the dream of fools*. Perhaps the same opinion might be pronounced of their *unfashioned justice*. Whatever in sound policy and enlightened wisdom might be the truth of the case, if the superior country conceived it to be her interest to oppress or impoverish the inferior, the latter would be oppressed and impoverished. No human precaution could prevent it, and nothing but revolution could redress it.

But we are told, that after an Union the laws enacted will be *universal*, equally affecting the three united nations, and consequently equally benefitting them. Here again you are attempted to be imposed upon by a sound. Who will guarantee that all future laws will be universal? But suppose it sufficiently secured, does it follow that a commercial regulation, which will benefit England, must benefit Ireland equally—or that Ireland cannot be injured by a tax or a restriction upon any branch of manufacture or commerce, by which England will not be equally wounded? Would it be impossible, for instance, to enact a law, or impose a tax, which should purport equally to bind any manufacturer of linen, or of woollen, or of cotton, in the united nations,

without producing the same effect in each country? As long as from climate, soil, accident, or habit, different manufactures shall be in a different state of culture in each country—that is as long as the world will last—it will be easily practicable for the dullest Chancellor of the Exchequer to crush the commerce of our nation, without affecting Great Britain, except as far as she will be interested in our general prosperity, by laws and regulations which will be nominally and apparently equal and universal.—Illustrations are obvious, and would be endless.

These principles are derived from the immutable nature of man. Weigh them well, my countrymen—consult your history, and examine your prospects calmly, and firmly, and then decide whether you ought, in an hour of affliction, in a paroxysm of despair, to renounce all your boasted and fruitful acquisitions in commerce and constitution, and consign your posterity for ever to the guardianship of Great Britain—to rely implicitly upon her good faith, her sisterly affection, her sympathy, or her self-love.

Is it, my countrymen, really and in truth the case, that the identity of interest after an Union must be so clearly felt and understood by Great Britain, that she never can conceive it possible that she could be exalted, while you are degraded? You are not confined to delusive theory, or fableish conjecture, upon that subject. You have long lived under the fostering protection of a supreme Legislature over both countries; and you have survived it. During that dismal period, that more than polar night, even while the Legislative supremacy of Great Britain was controuled by a National Senate—more controuled than under any modification of an Union it can possibly be in future—what was your condition? Did you really grow with the growth, and flourish with the prosperity of Great Britain? If I answer this question; if I enter into a detail of your situation for

centuries, under a more secure arrangement than that proposed, the Patriot Secretary will say I am intemperate; I am factious; I am inflaming the people to sedition; I am insinuating ideas dangerous to the connection with Great Britain.

To the present safe and honourable connection, I am persuaded, the virtue, talents and property of the nation, with very little exception, are devotedly attached. But I am equally convinced that a recurrence of the state of fordid dependence, from which we so lately emerged, or of a similar state, even under the most plausible guise, would alienate the affections of this country for ever; and that the projectors of an Union, while they are imposing ideal bonds of connection, are sowing the seeds of lasting disgust and alienation. The dullest man must soon see, if he has not already seen it, that a Legislative Union will leave us in a more dependent and unprotected state, than we were in before the Volunteers of Ireland (as the Patriot Secretary states it) *took advantage of the distresses of the Empire, to assert the independence of our Parliament.* The comparison is simple and easy. There is something common, and something peculiar in each state. By the latter, their relative value must of course be estimated. The British Parliament, consisting of five hundred British Senators, may be truly considered in each system, as the common fountain of power. In each state there is a peculiar corrective to this power. In our former dependent state, three hundred Irishmen, exercising what may be called a concurrent jurisdiction within the heart of this kingdom, restrained the excesses of that power, and finally shook off its supremacy, without a convulsion. In our new connection, at the utmost one hundred probably of the same three hundred will be blended with the five hundred British senators; and if they are so disposed, will have an opportunity of trying their powers of persuasion in favour of Ireland. I cannot hesitate to prefer the former corrective to the latter; and rather than submit to an Union, I would implore the Legislature to re-enact the

6th Geo. I. and leave us in possession at least of our former Constitution.

What a sad alternative has the rashness of a few political projectors, imposed upon every loyal and feeling subject of this realm, who sincerely loves British connection and Irish liberty, and knows and feels that they are compatible, and who shrinks from the dreadful necessity of making an election between them? If we are compelled to speculate, upon what the conduct of Great Britain, and the condition of Ireland probably will be, after our independent Legislature shall be abolished, must we not enquire how these things were, before it was established? And if we do enquire (may God avert the necessity)—shall we not enquire with freedom, as long as we are freemen? I shall so far at present submit to the Patriot Secretary, as to postpone this enquiry. The desperate project may be relinquished. It may become the duty, as it is the wish, of every loyal Irishman, to bury in oblivion past melancholy details. The memory of our misfortunes may, no doubt, become a shield to protect us against their recurrence; but like the obsolete armour of our ancestors, it should be left to the rust of time, and not brought into use, but upon the last necessity. X.

A QUERY FOR CASUISTS.

Doctor M'Kenna's pamphlet argues, that an Union is necessary, to protect the Catholics from the Orangemen.

The pamphlet, *Union or not, by an Orangeman*, argues, that an Union is necessary to protect the Orangemen from the Catholics.

The pamphlet ascribed to the Secretary, argues, that an Union is necessary for both the above purposes.

Query—which of the three arguments is true?

A. B.'s song is too personal; the M. S. S. will be left wherever the author directs.

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